

THE ADOPTION PROCESS

Families who desire to adopt through the Adoption Agency must apply and be approved for an adoptive placement upon meeting the requirements of the California Department of Social Services.

The first steps in the adoption process are:

- Attend the Resource Family Approval (RFA) orientation to learn more about our children and our system. For more information, call (661) 631-6204 or visit us at www.kerncounty.com/dhs/FosterFamilyResources
- Become an approved Resource Family caregiver.
- Meet with your assigned social worker to discuss your family needs and the needs of the foster children.

For more information about the adoption process please call (661) 873-2400.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Do I have to be married to adopt?

No. Adoptive parents can be single or married, male or female.

Am I too old or too young to adopt?

The general rule is that an adoptive parent must be at least 10 years older than the child they are wishing to adopt. Many grandparents or retired people are also adopting children today. While there is no age limit to adopt, you must be in sufficient health to parent a child.

Do I have to be wealthy to adopt?

No. While independent adoptions through a private adoption agency generally cost thousands of dollars, the law only allows a fee of up to \$500 for adopting a child through the Human Services Adoption Agency which is routinely waived. You do, however, have to have sufficient income to meet the child's needs.

Is financial and medical assistance available?

While prospective adoptive families need to be self-supporting, most children adopted through the Adoption Agency are eligible for financial assistance and Medi-Cal through the Adoption Assistance Program. Assistance is based on need and continues until age 18 but may continue until age 21 under unique circumstances. The program is designed to allow children to be adopted rather than remain in foster care.



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Adoption



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ADOPTION

The Human Services Adoption Agency of Kern County is a full service adoption agency approved by the State of California Department of Social Services.

Adoption Agency services include:

- Assessment of a child or children
- Moving children from foster care into a permanent home
- Various legal services required to facilitate adoption
- Adoptive Assistance Program Benefits
- Post-adoption services including counseling referrals, birthparent and/or adoptee searches and background information

THE CHILDREN

The vast majority of children placed for adoption through the Human Services' Adoption Agency are children who entered the child welfare system due to safety concerns in their family of origin. There are many children in the child welfare system who need out-of-home care, including:

- Children 0 - 17
- Ethnicities
- Teenagers
- Children with special needs
- Siblings

Many are, or will become, eligible for adoption by Resource Families. The Adoption Agency is continually seeking families that are motivated to make a difference in the life of a child.



PERMANENCY PLANS

Once it is determined that reunification with a child's birth family is not possible, then adoption, legal guardianship or another planned permanent living arrangements become options. When a child is freed for adoption, it is frequently the Resource Family, who is considered as the prospective permanent family.

THE NEED FOR RESOURCE FAMILIES

A Resource Family certification is needed almost always to adopt through the Human Services Adoption Agency and is available through the Department of Human Services. Many Resource Families are approved solely for the purpose of Adoption.